

whether you are going to be a scientist or an engineer, it is really determined in that age, from about 14 to 16. If I happened to ask the American people listening but also my colleagues, if there are 29 industrialized countries, and we want to rank mathematics performance of students around the world, is the United States first? You would think so. Maybe fifth? Surely, you would think so, in the United States of America, with our resources and our great innovation and culture of creativity and the American dream.

It is not 5th. It is not 10th. It is not 15th. It is not 20th. The United States now ranks 24th of 29 industrialized nations in math literacy among 15-year-olds. We fall behind who? You can name 23 of them, but it is Finland, Korea, Canada, the Czech Republic, Ireland, Poland, Hungary, Spain, France.

Business leaders who observe this tell us that fewer and fewer American workers have the math and science skills they need for today's jobs. One researcher at the Hudson Institute warns:

We're rolling into the most severe shortage of skilled workers this country has ever seen.

And in what must be the most dismal development, tutoring American students in math via the Internet is becoming a boom industry—in India. We are actually outsourcing our education.

All this really says: What do you do? These are the observations. They are observations at the middle school level, the high school level, the graduate level, even beyond graduate level, and we are failing. So it is incumbent upon us to act, and to act with meaningful solutions that respond to a real problem that is there today, and it is going to increase over time. We cannot afford to lose the technological race. It is a matter of economics. It is a matter of security. I believe it is a matter of national security as well. It is a matter of keeping jobs, good-paying jobs right here in America.

People say: Well, Senator FRIST, he is a doctor. He is a scientist. He has a little bias.

It is way beyond that. Math and the hard sciences are what drive innovation in just about every single industry today. From computers, to my own field of medicine, we depend on technology to improve our quality of life, to be able to figure out how we solve problems that seemingly are insurmountable, that are unsolvable. We solve them by the most innovative, most creative, the most advanced technological solution. That is where that competitive edge exists.

Not only that but math comprehension is critical to everyday tasks today, whether it is balancing the checkbook or figuring out how to interpret your 401(k). You need those everyday skills. We are thriving in a fast-changing modern world, constantly evolving world, moving so much faster than any of us would have anticipated

5 or 10 years ago. We need these skills to survive and to thrive.

That is why in terms of action, in the sort of things we need to do, in August I proposed the national SMART grant. The national SMART grant provides low-income students up to \$1,500 in their third and in their fourth year of college to pursue math and science. Together the maximum Pell grant and the national SMART grant cover nearly an entire typical State university tuition bill for those last 2 years.

People say: Why the last 2 years? The last 2 years because that is when people determine their majors, in those years of college. The national SMART grant will make it easier for low-income students to meet that heavy class load in math and in science. We know that those academic loads are heavy in those particular fields.

Some of my colleagues have worked on this. I thank them. To start naming them, Senators ENZI and ROBERTS and WARNER have done a tremendous job in getting this legislation to the point that it exists, and each has been a champion of rigorous math and science education. In addition, I thank Chairman ENZI, especially, for more than doubling the investment in this SMART grant program. It is focused on the needs I am speaking about today. As a matter of fact, the SMART grant is a good, solid first step in getting America's science and math education back on track so that we truly can globally compete.

Mr. President, throughout our history, our Nation has been blessed to be a land of innovation and creativity and dynamism. We have attracted the best, and we have attracted the brightest from across the oceans. And they have come and made our country an even more vibrant and more dynamic place. I am confident that if we keep our focus on the fundamentals, America will continue to offer unrivaled opportunity and prosperity for generations to come.

JAPAN BEEF TRADE

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President I have joined with my colleague from North Dakota, Senator CONRAD, and 19 other Senators to introduce a bill to restore normal beef trade with Japan.

Prior to the discovery of BSE or mad cow disease in the United States in December 2003, Japan was the largest export market for American beef in the world. But since that fateful day 2 years ago, U.S. beef producers have been locked out of the Japanese market.

To say the loss of this market has been detrimental to the viability of the American beef industry is an understatement. This is an issue that effects every part of the U.S. beef industry from the cowboys in western Kansas to the folks standing in line at the grocery store shopping for hamburger patties in New York City.

And perhaps this is felt no where as strongly than in places like Dodge

City, KS Dodge City is a town that has built its economy on the beef industry since the days of the wild west. It is a place where the number of cattle far outnumbers the number of people that live within the county lines. And it is the place that I call home.

The beef industry is a major economic driver for Dodge, but it's one of the largest industries in Kansas—representing over \$5 billion in annual revenue.

We are a state with 6.65 million head of cattle, compared to a human population of 2.6 million. In 2003, cattle represented 62 percent of the Kansas cultural cash receipts and the processing industry alone employs over 18,700 Kansans. And to boot, we rank in the top three of virtually every major beef statistic.

But, trade with Japan has an impact that extends well beyond the borders of Kansas—it's an issue that affects all of farm country. The cattle industry comprises one of the largest sectors in American agriculture—with business in every state. Japan is the largest export market for food and agricultural products from the United States and beef is one of the largest and most lucrative exports to Japan.

In short, for ranchers across farm country, including those in Kansas, there are few issues more important than the viability of the beef industry—and specifically how we handle BSE.

This week marks the year anniversary of the mutual agreement the U.S. and Japan signed to resume normal beef trade. Since then, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, USDA, has worked hard to implement substantive improvements in our ability to prevent, identify and respond to BSE. For instance, as a part of their enhanced animal surveillance effort, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, APHIS, has tested over 450,000 head of cattle for BSE.

Despite this increased testing, Japan refuses to reopen its market and has instead relied upon imports of beef from countries with little or no testing for BSE.

The increased U.S. testing, in coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration implementation of safeguards that ensure the safety of our food supply, have bolstered our claim to having the safest and most abundant food supply in the world.

Regrettably, the Japanese has failed to match these standards with prudent efforts to change their policy of keeping American beef out of Japan.

The Japanese Food Safety Commission, the body with the delegated responsibility to review the process by which Japan would reopen its market, and others within the government have been unresponsive to extensive diplomatic efforts made by U.S. officials during the last year.

The office of the U.S. Trade Representative and USDA have worked in concert with President Bush, other

cabinet agencies and officials and U.S. Congress to restore regular beef trade.

Despite the efforts of even the highest office in our nation's government, Japan continues to keep American beef out of their country.

The Japanese Food Safety Commission and others within the government have repeatedly demanded excessive documentation and paperwork with little or no justification. None of these requests reflect the internationally accepted phytosanitary guidelines. Rather, they appear to be a dilatory tool to prevent any effort to resume the purchase of American beef.

There have been claims that American beef is unsafe. This is simply not true. The international science says our cattle under 30 months of age are safe and not at risk. Yet, we have agreed to not send meat from any animals under 20 months of age to Japan.

Furthermore, after 20 confirmed cases of BSE in Japan, the claim that U.S. beef is not as safe as Japanese beef is simply an insult to American producers. Still the market remains closed to the U.S.

In recent weeks, Japan has insisted upon an unwarranted and unjustified trade barrier by preventing the resumption of regular beef trade with the U.S. Japan has a complicated bureaucracy in place to deal with the issue of BSE. In 2003, the Japanese Parliament established the Food Safety Commission as a Cabinet Office tasked with ensuring food safety.

This week, the Japanese Food Safety Commission again failed to reach an agreement to remove the blockade to U.S. beef imports. And to insult to injury, four of the Commission's 12 members did not even show up to the meeting because of their alleged concern with the safety of U.S. beef.

I am troubled that our negotiations with Japan have deteriorated to this point. Japan has traditionally been a distinguished and important trading partner for the U.S. Furthermore, they have been a critical ally in the War on terrorism.

Despite, this long-standing relationship, I am here today to support legislation that requires the U.S. Department of Treasury to implement additional tariffs on goods grown, produced or manufactured in Japan unless the U.S. Trade Representative certifies that Japan has reopened its market to American beef by December 15, 2005.

I have long supported free trade. Our country has benefitted from trade agreements with Chile, Australia, Canada and Mexico, and now Central America. These trading relationships are a necessity to ensure the ability of American farmers, ranchers and businessmen alike to compete in the global marketplace.

But, these agreements hinge heavily upon the commitment of the participating countries to uphold the principles of free trade—and for agriculture trade that means abiding by the international science standards that set im-

portant standards for animal, plant and human safety.

Prior to the discovery of a case of native-born BSE in a cow that never entered the food supply, we enjoyed this kind of trading relationship with Japan. However, Japan has chosen to ignore internationally recognized science and has instead based their food safety on emotional, politically-driven arguments. And, this comes at a high price for the American beef industry.

Since December 2003, the U.S. beef industry has experienced roughly \$6 billion in cumulative economic losses—in current annual economic trade terms, this is about \$3.1 billion a year.

We've been patient, but with this kind of economic loss, the American beef industry cannot afford to wait any longer.

I will not stand idly by while politics and posturing drive our trade relationships.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation to send a message in the strongest way possible, that free trade is a two-way street. More importantly, in the context of the pending negotiations in the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization, I urge my colleagues to support this bill because it sends the message to American producers that we will stand up for American agriculture in our trade negotiations.

THE PATH FORWARD

Mr. KERRY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to have a recent speech I delivered on Iraq printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[October 26, 2005]

"THE PATH FORWARD"

(Georgetown University)

A few weeks ago I departed Iraq from Mosul. Three Senators and staff were gathered in the forward part of a C-130. In the middle of the cavernous cargo hold was a simple, aluminum coffin with a small American flag draped over it. We were bringing another American soldier home to his family and final resting place.

The starkness of his coffin in the center of the hold, the silence except for the din of the engines, was a real time cold reminder of the consequences of decisions for which we Senators share responsibility.

As we arrived in Kuwait, a larger flag was transferred to fully cover his coffin and we joined graves registration personnel in giving him an honor guard as he was ceremoniously carried from the plane to a waiting truck. When the doors clunked shut, I wondered why all of America would not be allowed to see him arrive at Dover Air Force Base instead of hiding him from a nation that deserves to mourn together in truth and in the light of day. His lonely journey compels all of us to come to grips with our choices in Iraq.

Now more than 2,000 brave Americans have given their lives, and several hundred thousand more have done everything in their power to wade through the ongoing internal civil strife in Iraq. An Iraq which increas-

ingly is what it was not before the war—a breeding ground for homegrown terrorists and a magnet for foreign terrorists. We are entering a make or break six month period, and I want to talk about the steps we must take if we hope to bring our troops home within a reasonable timeframe from an Iraq that's not permanently torn by irrepressible conflict.

It is never easy to discuss what has gone wrong while our troops are in constant danger. I know this dilemma first-hand. After serving in war, I returned home to offer my own personal voice of dissent. I did so because I believed strongly that we owed it to those risking their lives to speak truth to power. We still do.

In fact, while some say we can't ask tough questions because we are at war, I say no—in a time of war we must ask the hardest questions of all. It's essential if we want to correct our course and do what's right for our troops instead of repeating the same mistakes over and over again. No matter what the President says, asking tough questions isn't pessimism, it's patriotism.

Our troops have served with stunning bravery and resolve. The nobility of their service to country can never be diminished by the mistakes of politicians. American families who have lost, or who fear the loss, of their loved ones deserve to know the truth about what we have asked them to do, what we are doing to complete the mission, and what we are doing to prevent our forces from being trapped in an endless quagmire.

Some people would rather not have that discussion. They'd rather revise and rewrite the story of our involvement in Iraq for the history books. Tragically, that's become standard fare from an administration that doesn't acknowledge facts generally, whether they are provided by scientists, whistleblowers, journalists, military leaders, or the common sense of every citizen. At a time when many worry that we have become a society of moral relativists, too few worry that we have a government of factual relativists.

Let's be straight about Iraq. Saddam Hussein was a brutal dictator who deserves his own special place in hell. But that was not the reason America went to war.

The country and the Congress were misled into war. I regret that we were not given the truth; as I said more than a year ago, knowing what we know now, I would not have gone to war in Iraq. And knowing now the full measure of the Bush Administration's duplicity and incompetence, I doubt there are many members of Congress who would give them the authority they abused so badly. I know I would not. The truth is, if the Bush Administration had come to the United States Senate and acknowledged there was no "slam dunk case" that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, acknowledged that Iraq was not connected to 9/11, there never would have even been a vote to authorize the use of force—just as there's no vote today to invade North Korea, Iran, Cuba, or a host of regimes we rightfully despise.

I understand that as much as we might wish it, we can't rewind the tape of history. There is, as Robert Kennedy once said, 'enough blame to go around,' and I accept my share of the responsibility. But the mistakes of the past, no matter who made them, are no justification for marching ahead into a future of miscalculations and misjudgments and the loss of American lives with no end in sight. We each have a responsibility, to our country and our conscience, to be honest about where we should go from here. It is time for those of us who believe in a better course to say so plainly and unequivocally.

We are where we are. The President's flippancy "bring it on" taunt to the insurgents